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The FORM OF AN ADDRESS

Expressing the True Sense of the
Dissenting Protestants of ENGLAND:

WE are a PEOPLE diffused through His Majesty's KINGDOM, whom the LAW doth not otherwise know, than so as to account our very CHARACTER, by which we must distinguish our selves, our CRIME, and animadvert upon Us for it. And have not the Advantage of being in any formed Legal Society; whereby, under one common Notion, acceptably to apply ourselves to His Majesty, as others, to whom their Circumstances in these Respects are more favorable. That any should, undesired, take upon them to speak unto his Majesty, the Sense of the Rest, though it should fall out to be most strictly true, would not be reasonable, or satisfying; That it should be allowed Us to send Delegates from all Parts, to meet and represent our Common Sense, were a Privilege none will be so little modest as to ask; That any therefore should Address themselves in the Name of All jointly, is impossible; And to do it for themselves singly, were inconsiderable and presumptuous. But were it possible or permitted to Us to represent our common sentiments, they would certainly admit to be conceived after this following Tenour:

To the KING's most Excellent Majesty:

*The humble Representation and Address of Your Majesties
Subjects in this your Kingdom of ENGLAND, who
dissent from some Rites of Religion, established and
commonly practised therein.*

May it please your Majesty,

WE Your Majesty's most Loyal and Dutiful Subjects are most deeply sensible of Your Majesty's heavy Displeasure, which because it so peculiarly falls upon Us, and for Causes therefore that we must suppose are understood to be peculiar to Us, whereof Nothing offers it self to our Conjecture, but either our Diffe-

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rent Sentiments and Practices in the Matter of Religion ; or, That we are thought not to be duly affected towards your Majesty's Authority and Government.

VVe do therefore in all Humility prostrate our selves at the Footstool of your Royal Throne, and most humbly represent Our unfeigned Sense concerning both to your most Princely Consideration and Clemency ; VVe do with ingenuous Freedom and Sincerity acknowledge to your Majesty, That there are some RITES and MODES in the publick RELIGION and VVorship, which VVe sensibly find it is Our great Temporal Infelicity not to be satisfied with, and a greater difference in Religion is not to be generally imputed to Us, nor can be the Cause of a general Displeasure towards Us : Besides, that hereupon also VVe have been wont to worship GOD in such a VVay, as, according to the information of Our Consciences, We apprehend agreeable to the DIVINE VVILL. Nor can it enter into Our Minds That this can be the cause of Your Majesty's peculiar Displeasure towards Us. Your Majesty's declared aversion to afflict your Subjects meerly for their CONSCIENCES in Matters of Religion : And Our own great Experience hereof, cannot allow Us to admit any such Thoughts. Your Majesty knows there is such a thing as Conscience in man, which he hath it not in his power to command and alter as he pleases, it being its Office, under GOD, to command and govern him. Those of Your Majestie's Subjects, whose Practice in Religion is more agreeable to Your own Royal Perswasion, cannot, without great Uncharitableness, be supposed so generally to have chosen it, in design to please Your Majesty, but from the former Disposition of their own Minds, apprehending it more pleasing to God. VVherefore since all mens Minds are not of one Complexion more than their Bodies are; and Our Minds are irresistibly led to apprehended a VVay of Religion somewhat different to be more pleasing to the DIVINE MAJESTY. We cannot but conceive ourselves entituled to your Majesty's Grace and Favor herein, on the same common Reason with the rest of Your Subjects: For since no man did ever account, That Religion could have any other proper Design than the pleasing of GOD, and, That Your Majesty well knows, Those RITES and MODES of it from which we dissent, are not immediately commanded by GOD himself : and therefore, That he cannot be displeased by their not being Urged upon Us : VVe think ourselves bound to judge, That Your Majesty (accounting it your Part to provide for the pleasing of GOD, in the first place) will be much better pleased with our worshiping him without them, than either with our wholly forbearing any solemn VVorship of GOD, or VVorshiping him with them against our Consciences, both which would certainly displease him. If VVe should thus declare our selves to Your Majesty, That it is indeed the settled apprehension of Our Judgments and Consciences, That We should most highly offend God, if We did in all things fall in with the allowed way of Worship (which VVe generally do, as far as VVe can apprehend it lawful) but yet, in compliance to Your Majesty, we are willing to abandon Our Consciences, and incur the Divine Displeasure: VVe cannot doubt but VVe should hereby render Ourselves justly detestable to your Majesty, and to all Mankind. And whereas it is acknowledged, not only by all the Divines of the Church of England, but universally

universally by all Christians, That it is an indispensable Duty of natural Religion to worship GOD in Assemblies: If it be possible, can we hope to please Your Majesty, by resolving against such worship of GOD, when that We ought so to worship him is contest and agreed on all hands; But the doing it in the use of the RITES and MODES which We scruple is so doubtful and disputed: a thing, and by Us feared to be sinful: Could we any way more provoke Your Majesty than by refusing our natural rightful Homage to the Supream RULER, whose Vicegerent you are? Or, If We should tell the reverend Fathers of the Church, We are ready to come into their Communion against Our Consciences, would That qualify Us for their Communion? Or, can We think Dissimulation were more Venial? and the professing that to be according to our Consciences which is really against them? We cannot therefore but apprehend it were a VVrong to Your Majesty never to be atton'd for, if we should ever have allow'd ourselves to think our meer Dissent in the Matter of Religion were the thing for which Your Majesty appears so much offended with Us. And,

May it please your Majesty,

As to the Matter of Our LOYALTY, VVe make this sincere Profession, That the same Conscience which constrains Us to Dissent from so many of Your Majesties Subjects in some Circumstances of Religion, doth most strictly oblige us to agree with the most dutiful and loyal of them in obeying to Our utmost Your Majesty's Laws in all things else. And not only to obey, but endeavour to preserve your Majesty's Authority and Government, with the hazard of all that is dear to Us, together with your Royal Person, your Honor, Interest, Rights and Prerogatives, and the SUBSTANCE of the established Religion, which is common to Your Majesty, and Your Kingdom with Us. Nor, if all the rest of Your Majesties Subjects were called, in reference to all these things, to express their Duty to Your Majesty, apart from Us, (of which Exclusion we should have as impatient a Sense, as to have our own Limbs torn from us) we should never decline so laudable a Contention as to Vye with them in all Expressions of that noble Kind. Nor should they ever be able more zealously to abhor or oppose any whatsoever Plots, Confederacies, Associations or Conspiracies contrary hereunto than VVe. Neither can we suppose That Your Majesty's sober minded Subjects will be so Unequal as to reproach Us with the Bloody Contests of former daies, which hap'ned before, probably, the greater part of Us were born. The stated and published Occasions whereof had no connection with the matters of our present Difference and Dissatisfaction; and wherein yet there are some of Us still surviving That took part with the Crown, and not many that had other participation, than in the Miseries that from thence descended in common to Us with the Nation: The Reports and Histories whereof we never read or hear but with horror, still feeling within ourselves, even at this distance, the Convulsions, Fears and Dangers of our Country, at length return'd to its former settled state by Your Majesty's glorious Restitution, whereto considerable numbers of Us (as we believe your Majesty doth not forget) joyfully contributed their utmost and not useless Endeavours. And after the Instruction giv'n to all Your Majesty's Subjects of whatsoever Denominations, by the Divine Providence which restored Your Majesty to the glorious Throne of Your Ancestors in so peaceable a way, and by Your

Majesty's Authority and Example, with the Prudent Determination of the Orders and States of Your Realm, for the abolishing the Remembrance of those unnatural Contentions: We account, That both the sense of our Duty and our Interest, and even Time it self should dispose all our Minds so far to bury them in an everlasting OBLIVION, as that no Seeds of future Animosity should thence remain among Your People: With the entire Body of whom, as we are most strictly united, not only in all the Affection and Duty to Your Majesty, which both Your Sacred Rights and Your Royal Goodness do claim from us, but also in all the SUBSTANTIALS of the best Religion that ever any Nation enjoy'd: So we doubt not but in due time Your Majesty's great Wisdom and Goodness will find out proper means of effecting an Entire UNION among all your Subjects, in those lesser things also, which that they are the Occasion of any remaining Difference, we can but Lament (as we do with very sensible Grief and Sorrow) but cannot Remedy.

In the mean time we most humbly beseech Your Majesty, That we may stand right in your Majesty's gracious Estimation and Acceptance, and shall ever continue daily Supplicants for all Divine Blessings upon Your Royal Person, Family and Government.

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